

Nationalism was intolerably stupid They had no love for the South African capitalist or his British friends, but the pro-Boer line seemed to them purely sentimental and Nationalist, and they lead anti-war as pro-Boer They were eminently not pro-Boers, though it is a travesty of their attitude to call them Jingoists They were "Great Englanders," and could not understand the "Little England" standpoint, or what it was all about

On this issue they found themselves in sharp collision with the Independent Labour Party, which, under the guidance of Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald, was hot against the war MacDonald, indeed, having been a member of the Fabian Executive since 1894, tried to get the Society to take his line Webb and Shaw opposed him, on this The Fabian Society was not a political society They were in no sense equipped to express a view on the war it would have no weight if they did, and would serve no useful purpose Anyhow, the Society was divided on the matter the effort to force the issue might break it up That not to express a view against the war would be taken, in the hectic circumstances of the hour, as an expression of support of it, might be a description of what would be said it was not a true description of fact It was, however, another argument against pressing the matter to a vote, whose result, one way or the other, was certain to be misinterpreted MacDonald however, took the view that "those who are not with us are against us "

He was defeated after a postal ballot of members, which showed 217 for him, and 259 against. Inevitably, at a time when feeling ran intensely high, the defeat of the Peace resolution, as it was called, was interpreted as being a declaration by the Fabians in favour of the war. On that ground, a handful of members—fifteen—resigned, including Mac-Donald, and, oddly enough, J F Green, who was to defeat him as a "pro-German" at Leicester in 1918,